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Advisory Committee on Environmental Standards

First Annual Report

1990/91



Ministry of the Environment

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**ACES Mailing Address:**

**135 St. Clair Avenue West  
Suite 100  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4V 1P5**

**Telephone: (416) 323-5034  
Fax: (416) 323-5080**

Submitted to the  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL

Date:

*March 25, 1992*

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Advisory Committee on Environmental Standards (ACES) is to contribute to environmental improvement in Ontario by advising the Minister of the Environment on sound, practical environmental standards that have been developed through an open process of public consultation.

ACES was established in May 1990 to advise the Minister of the Environment on standards for environmental contaminants after considering public input and pertinent scientific, legal, economic and socio-cultural issues. The intent was to open up the process of standard setting and provide for public involvement.

## MANDATE

The ACES mandate is derived from Order in Council 1138/90, which sets out ACES' role and basic responsibilities.

ACES was established to advise the Minister in the following areas:

- Policies, principles and procedures to be used in the development of environmental standards
- Priorities for research and data gathering related to the development of environmental standards
- Priority substances for standard setting

## RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to fulfill its mandate the Committee will:

- Evaluate the scope, assumptions, interpretations, and methodologies used in the development of a proposed environmental standard
- Consult with the public
- If necessary, undertake further consultation with the public and/or the Ministry and other experts to clarify issues
- Forward its findings and recommendations together with supporting rationale and any other pertinent information to the Minister of the Environment
- Provide feedback to the public about its recommendations and how public input was considered

Insert Photo Here

**Back row, left to right:** Keith Winterhalder, David Pengelly, Robert Boldt, Mary Morison, Doug Cook, Helen Henrikson, Sally Paterson, Ian Brindle, Susan Harder (ACES office), and Catherina Spoel.  
**Front row, left to right:** Peter Victor, Jan Shwetz (ACES office), Mark Goldberg, Honourable Ruth Grier (Minister), Beth Savan, Eva Kennedy (ACES office), and Ralph Stanley.

## ACTIVITIES

### FULL COMMITTEE

In the first months after being established the Ministry briefed the Committee on the various initiatives underway in standard setting. These included presentations from Air Resources Branch, Water Resources Branch, Hazardous Contaminants

Coordination Branch, Approvals Branch and Legal Services Branch.

The Committee also heard from the Canadian Environmental Law Association, who expanded on their previous submissions to the Ministry about their expectations of public involvement in the standard-setting process.

Committee members attended a presentation on current activities

with given the limitations on each member's time.

The Subcommittee also prepared a general information brochure about the activities of the Committee for distribution to the public.

### BENZENE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Benzene Subcommittee provided a review of the criteria document on a Provincial Water Quality Guideline for benzene and referred the document back to the Ministry with recommendations for revisions.

The Subcommittee also provided input for a draft of the Provincial Water Quality Objective Setting Process document.

Standard-setting processes in other jurisdictions were reviewed for comparison with those of the Ministry of the Environment.

### ZERO DISCHARGE JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE

A joint subcommittee comprised of members of ACES and the Municipal-Industrial Strategy for Abatement (MISA) Advisory Committee was established to investigate the concepts of zero discharge, virtual elimination of toxic substances, and pollution prevention in order to advise the Minister about their implementation.

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement states in Article II as one of

its policies that "The discharge of toxic substances in toxic amounts and the discharge of any or all persistent toxic substances be eliminated". Annex 12 further states as one of its general principles that "The philosophy adopted for control of inputs of persistent toxic substances shall be zero discharge".

The International Joint Commission's initiatives are being studied. The chair was invited to sit on the Round Table on Zero Discharge in Thunder Bay to look at using Lake Superior as a demonstration model of this concept.

### SUMMARY REMARKS

ACES has spent its first year establishing its role, exploring various issues, building consensus among its members, and developing a working relationship with the Ministry. The Committee is now prepared and eager to carry out its intended responsibilities in advising the Minister on the development of environmental standards.

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